



The Christ Church History and Archives committee has been formed to collect, document and preserve the material and social history of the Parish and to encourage participation and involvement of all parishioners.

Altar Guild

Until the later nineteenth century, the care of the altar in the Church of England was the responsibility of ordained clergy, known as sacristans. Then, women became assistants to the sacristan, and by the early twentieth century, they had replaced them. Forming Altar Guilds, under clergy guidance, they developed protocols for the appropriate care of the Altar, its brass, silver, linens and flowers. Before the ordination of women in the 1970's, the Altar Guild was, in fact, the only mechanism by which women could be involved in the rituals at the Altar.

The original members of what became the Christ Church Altar Guild belonged to the Women's Auxiliary, which was apparently convened right at the beginning in 1913, since the WA was thanked in the Vestry minutes that year for carpeting the chancel. Gradually a separate group emerged, for which members were chosen by the clergy, and encouraged to pray before beginning their duties.

The first written account of the Altar Guild dates to 1934 and reports its 12 members attending the Annual General Meeting and the state of their accounts. By this time, the Guild was divided into four groups, as it is today, who are independently and sequentially responsible for the altar duties each Sunday. Members had to pay a fee to belong to Altar Guild, which along with fund raising events, paid for Guild expenses and that has continued until quite recently.

By 1969, a constitution was developed, which outlined the structures and functions of the Guild. A Linen Convener and Flower Convener were defined, like we have today, the latter being responsible for maintaining a calendar of sponsors for each Sunday's flowers. At that time, loose flowers were purchased, so there was as also a flower arranger; nowadays the arranging is done by the florist prior to delivery.

Procedural manuals for Anglican Guilds appeared by the turn of the century. The first "Green" manual for our Guild, was created in 1973, and it has been regularly updated since then, to reflect changes in liturgical practice. It provides a detailed written outline of procedures, complete with pictures and is considered key to the maintaining the exacting standards, by which members work.

In 2018, the Altar Guild consisted of 42 active members. However, the make-up of Anglican Altar Guilds is changing again. As women become less available for this work, history had turned full circle and men are being invited to join. They are particularly useful for putting up the Thanksgiving and Christmas decorations.

Parishioners are invited to contact John Mendham (jhmendham@telus.net) or other committee members if they would like a copy of a longer historical article on this subject, or if they have oral or tangible records they would like to.

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There are two chalices, from which consecrated wine is served to communicants. The paten on the top of each chalice is for serving the bread. Under each paten is a purificator linen, use by the server to wipe the edge of the cup between communicants. Once the purificators are worn out, they are burned at the Easter vigil. The large bowl is a Lavabo, used by the presiding priest, to wash his/her hands, which he/she then dries on the lavabo towel. The Cruets are modern and are used to contain water and wine. Underneath the 'Fair' linen is the reserved bread, which is held in container with lid, called a Ciborium and the reserved wine, which has been consecrated in a previous service. This is all placed in a defined arrangement on a Credence table (from Credo, " I believe"-the first word of the creed), which is located near the Altar.

Monthly history article #2. Published March 2019.

RECTORS:

Horne	1913 – 1929	Tatchell	1966 - 1980	Tucker	2005 - 15
Luxton	1930 – 1933	Curtis	1980 – 1983	Belcher	2015 - 16
Kemp	1933 – 1944	O'Driscoll	1984 – 1992	Pickett	2016
Crump	1944- 1960	Boyles	1992 - 1993		
Dowker	1960-1966	Pike	1993 - 2003		